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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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DOD FOR USDP EDELMAN
STATE FOR SCA/FO A/S BOUCHER AND SAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A,
S/CRS, SCA/PB, S/CT, EUR/RPM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC PASS TO AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CG CJTF-76, POLAD, JICCENT
REL TO NATO/AUS/NZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ATTACK ON PRT MEHTARLAM KILLS CHILDREN AND ANA
MEMBERS ON HUMANITARIAN MISSION

1. (SBU) At approximately 1445 local time on April 1, PRT Mehtarlam sustained a vehicle borne suicide attack on the front gate of the ANA side of the compound. The lone driver attacked an ANA convoy entering the gate with his white Toyota Camry or Corolla. Governor Mangal reported that three children and an adult from the area were killed in the attack along with the driver. Six to eight ANA soldiers and four local nationals (another adult and three children) were wounded. There were no U.S. casualties.

2. (SBU) The convoy was returning from operations to assist victims of recent flooding in nearby Qarghayi district. The provincial hospital in Mehtarlam and the PRT provided medical care for the victims. Two ANA soldiers and a three year old child with critical injuries were evacuated to Bagram for medical care.

3. (SBU) The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and stated that Abdul Karim of Nangahar province was the driver. The PRT has been unable to confirm the claim and has doubts about its legitimacy because several other groups had also announced their intention to conduct similar attacks. The PRT's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team conducted an assessment of the area of the blast and determined the vehicle contained six 82mm mortar rounds and approximately 200 pounds of ANFO or other blasting agent.

4. (SBU) COMMENT. The attack ended a period of relative quiet in the province. This is the first VBIED attack in Laghman and the first direct attack on the base since a few mortar rounds were lobbed at the PRT in October 2006. There was only one IED road attack in Laghman in the past month and even this attack was reported by the local population to the ANP before it could be detonated. The cumulative effect of today's attack puts those responsible in a very bad light as the attack failed in its goal of killing ANSF or coalition forces, murdered innocent children, and hit an ANA convoy

just returned from assisting Afghans suffering from a natural disaster. We are working with the Afghan National Communications Coordination Center (NC3) to highlight ANSF work in responding to the flood and the costs of the population of such attacks. END COMMENT.
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